

Provider Spotlights

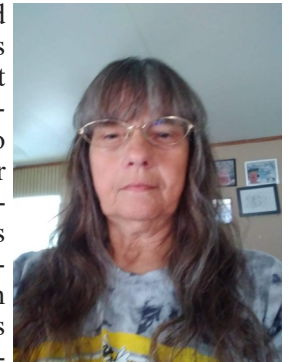
Cherokee County is honored to spotlight Ms. Pamela Pogue. Ms. Pogue has been a relative childcare provider in the Kids and Kin Program since 2017. She enjoys the trainings and information provided by the program, but she continues attending because of the caring support given by her Child Care Partner, Larinda Garrett. She says that she has gained a wealth of knowledge over the past 5 years. Ms. Pogue has a son, a daughter, and 4 grandchildren, with whom she enjoys spending time with. Some of their favorite activities to do together are playing at the park, doing arts and crafts, attending library events, and the Kids and Kin summer program. She also enjoys helping with her grandchildren's after school activities. In her free time, she enjoys cross stitching, puzzles, knitting and spending time with her friends and family. The Cherokee county Kids and Kin Program is very blessed to have her as member of our family.



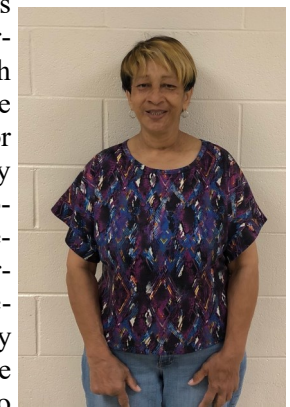
Colbert County is delighted to spotlight Mrs. Meadie Thompson. Mrs. Thompson has participated in the Kids and Kin Program for 5 years. She and her husband Mike have been happily married for fifty years. They have 2 children, 7 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. Mrs. Thompson enjoys gardening, reading, and caring for her family. She also enjoys joining her grandchildren on their field trips. Meadie is an active participant in her community. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Alpha Delta Kappa fraternity, and treasurer for the Colbert County Retiree Educators Association. Ms. Thompson says that the topics presented at the trainings are very helpful and she learns a lot. She believes firmly that you can always incorporate the new things that are learned into the lives of children even in their earliest years. Her wisdom, kindness, and thoughtfulness always brings joy to every training.



Walker County is privileged to spotlight Ms. Beverly Laird. Ms. Laird has been a relative care provider in the Kids and Kin Program for 3 years. She is always the first person to arrive at the training site, and loves the personal chat time that allows her to have with her Child Care Partner Rae Ann Moore. She has had perfect attendance 2 out of the 3 years that she has been attending. Beverly has 8 grandchildren ranging in age from 2 to 29. Beverly enjoys attending the Kids and Kin training classes for a number of reasons. She enjoys the fellowship and support of the other providers, and feels her knowledge of child development has grown tremendously. In her free time, Beverly enjoys watching her grandson play sports, cooking, and taking care of her flowers.



Clay County is thrilled to spotlight Carolyn Gibbons. Ms. Gibbons is a devoted mother and grandmother who has been involved with the Kids and Kin Program since 2018. Carolyn first became acquainted with Kids and Kin when she was the director of the Ashland Senior Center, and served as a community partner and member of our advisory council for two years. After retiring from the Senior Center, Carolyn worked as an in-home caregiver and companion for elderly women with health challenges. She now works part-time in order to help care for her grandchildren and have extra money to spend on them. Carolyn is full of lighthearted fun and joy, and at our trainings, she frequently shares at least one amusing story about her grandchildren or one of her interesting and humorous caregiver experiences. Carolyn has a big heart for her family, church and community. Special thanks to Ms. Carolyn Gibbons for your many years of faithful service to your family and community.



Water Safety for Kids



Never leave your child unattended around water.

When you think of places where kids are around water, you may think of recreational areas such as pools, lakes, and oceans. But have you thought about the areas in your home where kids can get into water? Use these tips for water safety at home, whether your kids are in bathtubs, backyard pools or around buckets.

1. The hard facts about drowning: Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death among children between 1 and 4 years old. And it's the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children 19 and under. Children less than a year old are more likely to drown at home in the bathtub or a bucket.

2. Watch kids when they are in or around water, without being distracted: Young children can drown in as little as one inch of water, so it's important to keep them within an arm's reach of an adult.

3. **Make sure you have everything you need for bath time, before placing your child in the tub:** Gather towels, clothes, soaps and bath toys so you don't have to leave children unsupervised.
4. **Empty tubs, buckets, containers and kids' pools immediately after use:** Store them upside down and out of children's reach.
5. **Close lids and doors:** Keep toilet lids and doors to bathrooms and laundry rooms closed when not in use.

How to Keep Kids Safe Around Home Pools

1. **Swim with a partner.** Keep young children and weak swimmers within arm's reach of an adult. Make sure older children swim with a partner every time.
2. **Install fences around home pools.** A pool fence should surround all sides of the pool and be at least four feet tall with self-closing and self-latching gates.
3. **Teach children how to swim.** Every child is different, so enroll children in swim lessons when they are ready. Consider their age, development, and how often they are around water.
4. **Make sure kids learn water survival skills.** Children should be able to do these four things:
 - step or jump into water over their head and return to the surface.
 - float or tread water.
 - combine breathing with forward movement in the water.
 - exit the water without using a ladder.
5. **Learn CPR and basic water rescue skills.** It is important to know how to respond in an emergency without putting yourself at risk.



Bubble Snake Play for Different Ages

Babies: An adult or older child can make these bubble snakes for babies to enjoy touching and squishing with their hands. This can be a great **sensory experience** for them.

Toddlers: Should be able to start trying to blow and make the bubble snakes themselves. Blowing a bubble snake can be a little hard for a young one and they might need a bit of help to get started. It's a fabulous way to strengthen all the muscles of the lips and tongue that are so important for speech development. Blowing bubble snakes also gives young children practice in creating a long sustained outward breath, again an important skill for fluent speech production.

Materials Needed: clean empty plastic bottle, rubber band, an old towel, dishwashing liquid, food coloring

Directions: Remove the bottle top and cut off the bottle base with adult supervision. (A steak knife works well.)

Cover the cut end of the bottle with a towel and secure in place with a rubber band.

Place two tablespoons of dishwashing liquid into the bowl and dilute with the same amount of water. Add a drop or two of food coloring

Dip the cut end of the bottle into the bubble mixture until the towel is wet thoroughly.

Blow through the bottle opening and watch the bubbles snake down.





5 Tips to Help Ease Children Back Into School Mode After Summer Break

Children experience a mix of emotions when it comes to going back to school. Easing back after the break can range from feeling really excited and eager, to concern, fear or anxiety. Getting butterflies or general worry about going back to school is common. Among the biggest worries of preschool children are feeling left out, being teased or saying goodbye to their caregiver at drop off. Concerns of school-aged children are about exams (27%), not wanting to return to school (13%), and problems with teachers (14%). Some feel lonely and isolated. The main concerns for tweens/ teens are coping with stress (44.7%),

school or study problems (34.3%), and mental health (33.2%). Not thinking about school until it is time to go back is one way to enjoy the last of the summer holiday. But for some, this can make going back to school more difficult. The following tips will help parents, children and caregivers with back-to-school challenges, and can help reduce any negative back to school experiences.

Set Up a Back-to-School Routine: Create structure about going back with a school routine. Be guided by your knowledge and history of what best supports your child and the children in your care during times of change and transition. Set up a practical chart of getting ready. You could include:

- what needs to be done each day for school like getting up, eating breakfast, dressing.
- what help does your child need from you to get ready?
- what they can do on their own? (Establish these together).

The first week back can cause disruption from being in holiday mode so don't forget healthy habits around sleep (around 9-11 hours for children aged 5-13 and 8-10 hours for those aged 14-17), exercise (around one hour per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity three times a week) and diet. Having consistent bed and wake-up times helps too. The National Sleep Foundation suggest starting two weeks before the first day of school to set sleep routine habits. But a week beforehand will help get children on their way.

Talk About Going Back to School: Most children deal with some level of stress or anxiety about school. They have insight into their school experiences, so find out what is worrying them by asking directly. You can offer support by normalizing experiences of worry and nerves. Reassure the child the feelings they have are common and they will likely overcome them once they have settled in. Worries and courage can exist together. Depending on the child's age, you can also try the following to help:

- early years/ pre-school: write a social story about going to daycare or school and the routine ahead.
- primary years: set up a peer/buddy system where a peer or older child meets the child at the door or, if they can, team up with the neighbor's kids.
- tween/ teen years: establish healthy routines as a family. Support each other around technology use, sleep and school work.

Look Out for Signs of Stress: Research suggests parents can miss signs of stress or anxiety in their children. The follow signs, (depending on age), can be red-flags that a child might be suffering from stress or anxiety.

- are more clingy than usual.
- appear restless and flighty or cries often.
- show an increased desire to avoid activities through negotiations and deal-making.
- try to get out of going to school.
- retreat to thumb sucking, baby language or increased attachment to a favorite soft toy.

If these behaviors persist for about half a semester, talk to the teacher or school counselor, there may be something more going on than the usual school nerves, like bullying.

Encourage Questions: Encourage questions children and tweens may have about the new year. What will be the same? What will be different? Often schools provide transition information. If the school hasn't, it might be worth contacting them to see if they can share any resources. Most importantly, let children know nothing is off limits to talk about.

Help Create a Sense of School Belonging: A sense of belonging at school can affect academic success and student well-being. Parents and caregivers can facilitate positive attitudes about school by setting an encouraging tone when talking about it, showing an interest in school life and supporting the child both academically and socially. Parents said that homework and schoolwork were the greatest drivers of stress in their children. When parents are more engaged in their child's schoolwork, they are better able to support them.



Family Guidance Center of Alabama
2358 Fairlane Drive
Montgomery, Alabama 36116

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Apple Oxidation Experiment

Have you ever noticed that if you slice an apple in the morning, it turns brown by lunch? This is actually a chemical reaction at work! In this experiment, you'll learn more about how the oxygen in the air around us causes this reaction (also known as oxidation). With a little help from zip-lock bags, test different liquids to see if you can figure out a way to keep apples fresh from morning to noon.

Materials Needed: 5 zip-lock sandwich bags, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of lemon juice, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vinegar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of milk, apple slices, permanent marker

Directions: On four zip-lock sandwich bags, write the name of the liquid you're going to test. Label a fifth bag "nothing" for your control bag. This bag will contain apples with no liquid. That way, you'll be able to see the difference between a normal apple and the other apples that have been soaked! Pour the water, lemon juice, vinegar, and milk in separate bags. Make sure to match each liquid to its label. Place two apple slices in each bag. Seal the bag and lightly shake it so the liquid coats the apple slices. Let them soak for two or three minutes. Pour any excess liquid out of the bags. Reseal them and check on the apples every 10 to 15 minutes to see what happens. Which ones turn brown? Which ones stay fresh?

Learn More: When apples are cut, the exposed fruit underneath the skin react with the oxygen in the air, which causes the apple slices to turn brown. This experiment explores how the apple slices react when coated with different liquids, like milk, lemon juice, vinegar, or water. You'll discover lemon juice is one of the liquids that works best. That's because lemon juice is very acidic (and why it tastes so sour!) and will react with oxygen before oxygen reacts with the apple. A light spritz of lemon juice will keep your apples fresh without altering their taste too much.